

real interviews and record witness statements. Congress has its own internal procedures and investigators for ethics complaints. We have our Ethics Committee. The House has its Ethics Committee. Congress set up procedures for ethics investigations in the lower courts. They exist. Judges are investigated, and people can know where you submit your complaint and how that complaint gets investigated.

The Supreme Court is unique across the entire Federal Government in being impenetrable to investigation, from no ethics inbox, to no process for reviewing a complaint, to no credible report at the end of the day. The highest Court in the land should not be held to the lowest standards in government.

So last week, Congressman HANK JOHNSON and I, joined by Senator BLUMENTHAL and Congressmen NADLER, QUIGLEY, and CICILLINE, reintroduced our Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act. Our bill would finally require the Supreme Court to have not just a code of conduct but a real process to enforce that code and other Federal ethics laws.

Our bill would also update judicial ethics laws, ending the ability of judges to ignore conflicts of interest and their recusal obligations; requiring Justices of the Supreme Court to disclose gifts and travel, as other Federal officials do; and exposing the real interests appearing at the Court behind amici curiae who lobby the Court under fake names.

Apparently, there has been a half-hearted effort at the Court to begin to deal with this. The Washington Post reported last week that the Justices discussed for years a binding code of ethics to no result, and the effort seems to have fallen apart. So that leaves Congress in the position that if they won't fix it, we will.

There are many problems plaguing our Supreme Court. Far-right, dark-money interests spent years stacking the Court with their handpicked Justices, who in turn have delivered for those interests at every available opportunity. We need to undo the damage wrought by the Court that dark money built and by those who built it, but we can start—we can start—by bringing basic standards of integrity to the Supreme Court, standards all other judges follow and standards that govern all high-ranking Federal officials across all three branches of Government—officials who are paid by taxpayers to serve the best interests of the American people.

To be continued.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE LEGAL OFFICE,
Washington, DC, November 28, 2022.

Hon. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HENRY C. JOHNSON,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WHITEHOUSE AND CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: I am writing in response to your letter dated November 20, 2022.

Justice Alito has said that neither he nor Mrs. Alito told the Wrights about the outcome of the decision in the Hobby Lobby case, or about the authorship of the opinion of the Court. Gail Wright has denied Mr. Schenck's allegation in multiple interviews, saying the account given by Mr. Schenck was "patently not true." (Don Wright is deceased.) Justice and Mrs. Alito became acquainted with the Wrights some years ago because of their support for the Supreme Court Historical Society, and they had a casual and purely social relationship. The Justice never detected any effort on the part of the Wrights to obtain confidential information or to influence anything he did in either an official or private capacity. Mr. Schenck's allegation that Justice Alito or Mrs. Alito gave the Wrights advance word about the outcome in Hobby Lobby or the authorship of the Court's opinion is also uncorroborated. Politico reports that despite several months of efforts, the publication was "unable to locate anyone who heard about the decision directly from either [Justice] Alito or his wife before its release at the end of June 2014." The New York Times stated that "the evidence for Mr. Schenck's account of the breach has gaps."

There is nothing to suggest that Justice Alito's actions violated ethics standards. Relevant rules balance preventing gifts that might undermine public confidence in the judiciary and allowing judges to maintain normal personal friendships. Judicial Conference gift regulations provide that a judge may not accept a gift from a person seeking official action from or doing business with the judge's court or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the judge's official duties, with only limited exceptions. See Guide to Judiciary Policy, vol. 2C, Ch. 6, §620.35. The Wrights owned a real estate business in Dayton, Ohio, and to our knowledge, they have never had a financial interest in a matter before the Court. In addition, the term "gift" is defined to exclude social hospitality based on personal relationships as well as modest items, such as food and refreshments, offered as a matter of social hospitality. Id. §620.25(a), (b). Similarly, Justice and Mrs. Alito also did not receive any reportable gifts from the Wrights. Gifts of less than "minimal value" received from one source in a calendar year need not be reported. And gifts do not count toward this threshold if they take the form of food, lodging, or entertainment received as personal hospitality of an individual, or food or beverages which are not consumed in connection with a gift of overnight lodging. See 5 U.S.C. App. §§102(a)(2)(A), 109(5)(D).

Very truly yours,

ETHAN V. TORREY,
Legal Counsel.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, when I look back at the 8 years I have been in the Senate, I can think of a lot of things I like about this job. I have real-

ly gotten to know staff on both sides of the aisle, a lot of Members on both sides of the aisle, being coached more than once by Elizabeth and Leigh on parliamentary procedure and rules of the Senate—those are all things I like about the Senate. But every year on this day, there is one thing I don't like about the Senate, and that is because 2 out of the last 10 years, Senate business has brought me here instead of being home with my wife on Valentine's Day.

Mr. President, my wife and I have been married for 36 years, and our first two babies—our two babies were born in Atlanta, GA, the Presiding Officer's great State. My wife Susan has been my valentine for 36 years, and I am away from her once again.

So if it wasn't a violation of the rules, I would pick up a sign just like this that says "I love my wife, and I wish her a happy Valentine's Day," but that is against the rules, so I am not going to do that. Instead, I am going to say: Susan Tillis, I love you, and thank you for 36 great years.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

The Senator from Indiana.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, during the Civil War, Walt Whitman took stock of Abraham Lincoln's appearance. The President had a face, the poet wrote, like a "Hoosier Michelangelo." But Whitman sensed that underneath the lines and the crags were wells of wisdom and tact perfectly suited to the President, hard-earned long ago.

You see, Abraham Lincoln is widely regarded as one of our country's greatest Presidents, a visionary and an inspiring leader who appealed to the highest American ideals and moved our Nation toward a more perfect Union.

Sunday marks the 214th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Even today, historians still wrestle with the question, how is a man of such character forged? The answer, I think, can be found in Southern Indiana, near the Ohio River. In 1860, when asked for details of his youth by a biographer, Abraham Lincoln was uncooperative. It could all, he said, "be condensed into a single sentence—the short and simple annals of the poor."

"That's all you or any one can make of it," Lincoln insisted. But, if you will pardon me, I would like to make a little more of it. My colleagues from Kentucky will no doubt point out that Lincoln's birth occurred in their Commonwealth, and as my colleagues from Illinois will likely remind you, when Abraham Lincoln departed for the White House, it was from their State. I will give them this: Lincoln was indeed born in Kentucky, and he did make his name in Illinois. But Abraham Lincoln was a Hoosier. "It was there I grew up," he recalled of Southern Indiana. It was there in Spencer County "I grew to my present enormous height," he once joked.

True, there is little left that Abraham Lincoln would recognize in our State today. There are just reminders of a once unbroken forest among the low hills; the soil—in it the graves of loved ones; and a great river separating north from south. In what does remain, though, we can still see where his character was formed, what prepared him for the trials to come.

The Lincolns arrived the same year Indiana became a State. It was still the frontier line. The woods were full of bears and the night air alive with the roar of mountain lions. This was a hard and heartbreaking life, uncertain and often short. Those years of Abraham Lincoln's life were characterized by loss—first the loss of his mother Nancy and later his sister Sarah—and by constant labor which he grew to so dislike. Schooling was scarce. Opportunities for self-improvement were few. By his own account, he had no more than a year of formal education.

Decades later, when Abraham Lincoln recalled his life in Indiana, he wrote, "My childhood home I see again, and sadden with the view," but he also wrote that among the memories, there was "pleasure in it, too." There were happy days in the Little Pigeon Creek community, captivating friends with his homespun stories, and there was the love of a stepmother who nurtured his curiosity.

The sparse schooling he had taught him to read and to write. In fact, he pored over what few books he could find: the Bible, a tattered biography of George Washington borrowed from a neighbor, and later a collection of Indiana law containing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

There was the Ohio River. That river was a gateway of possibilities and a point of departure to the outside world. Lincoln earned his first half dollar ferrying passengers on the river. He first saw the horror of slavery traveling down it.

By the time Abe Lincoln and his family left the Little Pigeon Creek community in 1830, Lincoln had spent a quarter of his life in Indiana. He crossed the Wabash River into Illinois, a grown man whose heart, touched by grief, was kind, generous, and strong; who could spin a yarn like no other; whose intellect far outpaced his meager education. Of course, he carried with him a great reverence for our founding's promise of freedom and a burning desire to rise in life.

Although Lincoln was loathe to speak of it as he grew older, those 14 years in Spencer County, IN—the sad and the joyous—shaped him. The qualities that saved the Union in its time of greatest peril were forged in the Indiana wilderness.

In March of 1865, only a few weeks before Lincoln's death, he addressed the 140th Indiana Regiment. The soldiers had recently captured a Confederate flag in North Carolina, which the President gave to Indiana Governor

Oliver Morton. Lincoln reminded those Hoosiers assembled that he was raised in their State, and he praised their Hoosier valor. But he was ever mindful of the Union. He said that day, "I would not wish to compliment Indiana above other states."

Well, Mr. President, for whatever it is worth, I do, because Lincoln belongs to all Americans, but Hoosiers can claim a special connection with Abraham Lincoln.

So, on the occasion of his birth, we once again celebrate the life and legacy of this remarkable Hoosier. He represents the best of us. He was one of us. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TRUDY PERKINS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Trudy Perkins, my communications director and the former acting chief of staff of my office, as she moves on to a new, well-deserved chapter—retirement.

Trudy's career has been unparalleled to say the least. She has spent 20 years working in Congress. Her service has made a difference for her colleagues and for so many Americans.

She grew up in Albany. If you take Route 90 just about 150 miles west—well, about 200 miles west, you will hit Cleveland. If you drive about 110 miles west, you will hit my wife's hometown of Ashtabula, OH. It is fitting that her final role in the Senate brought her back to a city on I-90.

Trudy is a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is an alumna of the State University of New York at Oswego. She spent the early years of her career working in television news, first in Albany—I know, in the Presiding Officer's State, you say "All-ba-nee," but up north, we say "All-buh-nee"—and then in Baltimore.

In 2002, she started on Capitol Hill with one of the real superstars in the House, now the late Representative Elijah Cummings, where she worked her way up to communications director and deputy chief of staff during her almost 20 years with that office. She served as an invaluable adviser to Representative Cummings. He trusted her with anything and everything. He often gave her phone number out to constituents and told them "Why don't you call Trudy" because things always got done. You know how Members of Congress don't always get them done, but people like Trudy Perkins do. He knew, no matter what the task was, that Trudy wouldn't just deliver, but she would do it kindly; she would do it with a smile; and she would do it with a positive attitude. It was easy for anyone to see her dedication to public

service and always, always, always to the constituents she served. She was dependable. She was hard-working. She was an integral member of their team and of the Cummings' office family.

Trudy has been an integral and trusted leader in my office. We were so lucky to have inherited her, in a sense, after the death of Representative Cummings. In January 2020, she joined my staff as the communications director. At the time, she was the only Black communications director serving in a Senate personal office. She had a talent for communications and press and the experience to prove it. That was clear to me before we ever spoke.

As I got to know her, I learned how much she cared about the issues that I care about and that Senator WYDEN does and Senator WARNOCK, the Presiding Officer, does. I learned how much she cared about those issues that matter most: civil rights, labor rights. She understood this from the writings about Dr. King's speeches, when Dr. King spent a lot of time talking to labor unions. Dr. King, in his last weeks of life, went to Memphis because of a labor strike of sanitation workers, and she understood, as I do and as John Lewis did, how Dr. King wove workers' rights and civil rights and women's rights and human rights all together. Trudy gets that.

From day one, she proved to be such an asset in our office by stepping in and leading a robust communications team during some of the most tumultuous years in the Senate that I have ever seen. In her first month, we faced domestic and foreign crises that she navigated with a steady hand. During her second month, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. It was an uncertain time. We all know that, and all of us in the country know that. We had never seen anything like it. Trudy stepped up and delivered for Ohioans and for her team in our office.

She transitioned our press shop from an in-person operation to a virtual one. It was a transition nobody had ever tried before that brought challenges and technical difficulties but also new opportunities to connect with Ohioans and with the Ohio media. At every turn, Trudy Perkins led with grace. She made sure that Ohioans got the information they needed to navigate the pandemic. She made a difference for so many in our office and in our State.

Her impact can't be measured just by her ability to meet challenge after challenge as her leadership also extended far beyond the technical aspects of a difficult job. She was a compassionate resource for everyone on her staff.

She took time to get to know the team and understand how they operated as a unit and who they are as individuals. She listened. She truly cared. And for the communications team, Trudy Perkins was a rock. She was a smiling face on Zoom calls. She organized virtual game nights and made a